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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ALMATY 000216

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E.O. 190356: N/A

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: SECRETARY JOHANNS' JANUARY 11 MEETING  
WITH FOREIGN MINISTER TOKAYEV

**¶11. (U)** Participants in Secretary Johanns' January 11 meeting with Kazakhstani Foreign Minister Tokayev in Astana:

U.S.  
Secretary Mike Johanns

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Mrs. Stephanie Johanns  
Ambassador John Ordway

Under Secretary of State for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs Josette Shiner

Under Secretary of Treasury for International Affairs

Timothy Adams

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Matthew Bryza

Lynne Tracy (Principal Officer, Astana)

Jim Loveland (Embassy Notetaker)

KAZAKHSTAN

Foreign Minister Kazymzhomart Tokayev

Ambassador to the U.S. Kanat Saudabayev

Director, Europe and America Department, MFA, Serzhan

Abdykarimov

Americas Desk Officer, MFA, Aidar Shakenov

MFA Press Spokesman Ilyas Samarov

**¶12. (SBU)** Summary: In his January 11 meeting with Kazakhstani Foreign Minister Tokayev, Secretary of Agriculture Johanns commended Tokayev for Kazakhstan's economic accomplishments and clear improvements in the conduct of elections, while urging the GOK to undertake further political reforms. The Secretary followed up on an earlier January 11 discussion (septel) of regional issues with President Nazarbayev, addressing the potential for greater regional infrastructure development and security cooperation. Tokayev acknowledged the need for further political reform, while noting that the country's geopolitical and sociological context demanded patience. End Summary.

Highlighting Importance of Regional Issues

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**¶13. (SBU)** Secretary Johanns and his delegation met with Kazakhstani Foreign Minister Tokayev on January 11. The meeting occurred hours after Nazarbayev's inauguration, and minutes after the delegation met with President Nazarbayev. The Secretary opened the discussion by reflecting on Nazarbayev's sizeable margin of victory in the December election. "It is clear he has a mandate," he said. Secretary Johanns told Tokayev that, in Nazarbayev's new term, "we see an opportunity to build our past relationship into something even more significant."

**¶14. (SBU)** Secretary Johanns informed Tokayev that he had discussed regional issues, including infrastructure and security, with Nazarbayev earlier that day. "It is very important," Tokayev agreed, adding that "so far, we haven't exploited existing opportunities." The region, he said, was characterized by "jealousy and competition." "We sleep in the same bed," he said of the Central Asian states, "but our dreams are different." One success, he noted, was that all five Central Asian states had signed TIFA (Trade and Investment Framework Agreement). Tokayev said that his government had proposed to Secretary Rice going a step further and implementing ideas discussed in the context of the agreement.

GOK Need to Address Electoral Shortcomings

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**¶15. (SBU)** Secretary Johanns told Tokayev that Nazarbayev commands a great deal of respect. Economically, the country reflected "so many positives." Discussion of political reform was encouraging. Secretary Johanns noted that he had told Nazarbayev that "we are encouraged by the elections - there were significant improvements." Nazarbayev clearly "has the support of his people," Johanns observed; it was now crucial to follow through on reform rather than letting problems fester.

Tokayev: Stability and Reform Intertwined

16. (SBU) Commenting on the election results, Tokayev remarked that "people appreciated his (Nazarbayev's) efforts." Twelve years ago, following independence, "no one believed we could succeed. Not even Gorbachev. Now we feel we have succeeded." Tokayev said that Nazarbayev had "great commitment to political reform." Nazarbayev had decided to first "build the economic basis" of the country. He realized that not undertaking further political reforms would be dangerous to the stability of the country, and maintaining stability was "our number one goal."

17. (SBU) "We have to persuade people to be patient," Tokayev continued, "being mindful of the political context - Russia, China, Afghanistan - and the country's lack of experience." "Kazakhstani society is not an easy one," Tokayev added, noting that within society there was considerable nationalistic sentiment, as well as "some who were inclined to religious extremism." However, he concluded, "we will be successful. Our commitment to the U.S. is unchangeable."

Political Reform: Opportunity to Cement a Legacy

18. (SBU) Secretary Johanns remarked that, in looking back over only a short period of time since independence, "you know you are on the right course." With a clear mandate and a working economy, Nazarbayev "has an opportunity to establish a legacy." Political reform in Kazakhstan, Secretary Johanns concluded, "would be an example for the world."

19. (SBU) Secretary Johanns and Tokayev ended the meeting with a brief discussion of agriculture. Tokayev noted that his government was still working on the issue of agricultural subsidies within the context of WTO accession. The Secretary offered USG technical assistance on the issue.

110. (U) Secretary Johanns did not have the opportunity to clear this cable.

ASQUINO